WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An isolated and purified nucleic acid molecule encoding an $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein, said nucleic acid molecule comprising a member selected from the group consisting of:

(a) a nucleic acid molecule encoding a protein having at least a 95% identity to a polypeptide comprising amino acids 1 to 1090 of SEQ ID NO:10;

(b) a nucleic acid molecule that is complementary to the polynucleotide of (a);

(c) a nucleic acid molecule comprising at least 15 sequential bases of the polynucleotide of (a) or (b);

(d) a nucleic acid molecule that hybridizes under stringent conditions to the polynucleotide molecule of (a) and has at least a 95% identity to the nucleic acid encoding a polypeptide comprising amino acids 1 to 1090 of SEQ ID NO:10;

(e) a nucleic acid molecule that encodes a splice variant of a human alpha 2 calcium channel comprising exon 1B;

(f) a nucleic acid molecule that encodes a splice variant of a human alpha 2 calcium channel comprising exon 37B; and

(g) a nucleic acid molecule that encodes a splice variant of a human alpha 2 calcium channel comprising exon 1B and exon 37B.

2. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 wherein the polynucleotide is RNA.

3. The nucleic acid molecule of claim 1 wherein the polynucleotide is DNA.

4. The isolated and purified nucleic acid molecule of claim 1, having a nucleotide sequence of (SEQ.ID.NO.:9).

5. An expression vector to express an $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein in a recombinant host, wherein said vector contains a nucleic acid sequence encoding a $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein.

6. The expression vector of claim 5 wherein the expression vector contains a nucleic acid molecule encoding an $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein having at least a 95% identity to a polypeptide comprising amino acids 1 to 1090 of SEQ ID NO:10.

7. A recombinant host cell containing an expression vector of claim 5.

8. The recombinant host cell of claim 7, wherein said nucleic acid molecule has a nucleotide sequence encoding an $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein having at least a 95% identity to a polypeptide comprising amino acids 1 to 1090 of SEQ ID NO:10.

9. A protein, in substantially pure form having at least a 95% identity with a polypeptide comprising amino acids 1-1090 of SEQ ID NO.:10.

10. The protein according to claim 9, having an amino acid sequence of: SEQ.ID.NO.:10.

11. A monospecific antibody immunologically reactive with an $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein.

12. The antibody of Claim 11, wherein the antibody blocks activity of the α2δ–4 calcium channel subunit protein.

13. A method for expressing an α2δ–4 calcium channel subunit protein in a recombinant host cell, comprising the steps of:

(a) transferring an expression vector capable of encoding an α2δ–4 calcium channel subunit protein into a cell; and

(b) culturing the cells under conditions that allow expression of the α2δ–4 calcium channel subunit protein from the expression vector.

14. A method for identifying compounds that alter α2δ–4 calcium channel subunit protein activity in a cell, comprising the steps of:

a) contacting a compound with a cell containing an α2δ–4 calcium channel subunit, and

b) measuring a change in the cell in response to the contacting step.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the cell contains three additional calcium channel subunits: an alpha2 subunit, a beta subunit, and a gamma subunit; and wherein the three subunits and the α2δ–4 subunit form a calcium channel complex.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the calcium channel complex is an L-type Voltage Sensitive Calcium Channel.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein the measuring step is measuring the influx of Ca^{2+} into the cell.

18. A method comprising the steps of:

(a) incubating a cell membrane from a cell expressing recombinant $\alpha_2\delta$-4 with radioactive gabapentin (GBP) and a candidate compound, wherein the membrane comprises an $\alpha 2\delta$–4 subunit of calcium channel and wherein the incubating step is for sufficient time to allow GBP binding to the $\alpha 2\delta$–4 subunit of calcium channels in the cell membranes,

(b) separating the cell membranes from unbound radioactive GBP,

(c) measuring binding of the radioactive GBP to the cell membranes, and

(d) identifying a compound that inhibits GBP binding by a reduction of the amount of radioactive GBP in step (c) to an established control.

19. A method for identifying compounds that alters $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein activity, comprising the steps of:

(a) combining a compound, a measurably labeled ligand for the $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein, and a $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein, and

(b) measuring binding of the compound to the subunit protein by a reduction in the amount labeled ligand binding to the $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit protein.

20. A compound active in any one of the methods of Claim 14, Claim 18, or Claim 19, wherein said compound is an agonist or antagonist of an $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel.

21. A compound active in the method of Claim 14, wherein said compound is a modulator of expression of a $\alpha 2\delta$–4 calcium channel subunit.

22. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound active in the method of Claim 14, wherein said compound is a modulator of calcium channel activity.